No 88 - JANUARY 1992

Refugees

UNHCR
United Nations
High Commissioner
for Refugees

READEX FICHE best copy available

C O N T E N T S

Director: Sylvana Foa

Editors: Christiane Berthiaume, Fernando del Mundo

Layout: Joëlle Decarroz

Photo Department: Anneliese Hollmann, Estelle Knüsli, Emmanuelle Anchisi

Staff Writers: Sylvie Girard, Peter Kessler, Ann Parker

Editorial Assistant: Virginia Zekrya

Administration: Brigitte Bartel

Distribution: Nicholas Birch, John O'Connor

Editorial Board: S. Chetty, J.M. Fakhouri, Dr. A.P. Mahiga, M.A. Savané, M. Schloeter

Refugees is published by the Public Information Service of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. The opinions expressed by contributing authors are not necessarily those of UNHCR. The designations used do not imply the expression of any opinion on the part of UNHCR concerning the legal status of a territory or of its authorities.

Refugees reserves the right to edit all articles before publication. Articles and photos not covered by copyright © may be reprinted without prior permission. Please credit UNHCR. Glossy prints not covered by copyright © may be made available, for professional use only.

English and French editions printed in Switzerland by Roto-Sadag SA, Geneva. Circulation: 200,000 in English, French, German, Italian, Japanese and Spanish.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
P.O. Box 2500
1211 Geneva 2 Depôt, Switzerland

Phone:	(022) 739-8111
Cable:	HICOMREF Geneva
Telex:	415 740 UNHCR-CH
Refugees Fax:	(022) 739-8439
Headquarters Fax:	(022) 731-9546

ISSN 0252-791 X

Cover Page: South African exiles return home. UNHCR/J.Gobbi

OPERATIONS

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR 4

A WORD FROM *REFUGEES* 5

PARTNERS: Ockenden Venture 42

SPECIAL REPORT : Refugees from Yugoslavia in Hungary 43

GOING HOME
The end of the Cold War could make the dreams of millions of refugees who yearn to return home come true. UNHCR has declared 1992 the "Year of Voluntary Repatriation" and has prepared programs to move refugees on five continents back to their countries.
6

DE-MINING
The shooting may have stopped, but millions of mines litter the roads back home for refugees from Angola to Cambodia. They include everything from large anti-tank mines buried deep beneath jungle tracks to tiny devices that are blown about by the wind.
12

AFGHANISTAN
Thirteen years after the bloodshed began and nearly three years after the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan, the world's largest refugee population languishes in dusty camps in Pakistan and Iran. Few of them expect to go home anytime soon.
16

I E N T S

SLAMMING DOORS
Fearing an uncontrollable influx of people from underdeveloped nations, more and more wealthy countries are pulling in the welcome mat. The right to seek asylum, one of civilization's oldest and most honored principles, is under threat almost everywhere. By Ron Redmond.

21

MASS MIGRATION AND THE GLOBAL VILLAGE
The issue of refugees is central to the way the world works. If there really is to be a New World Order, then how to handle and to protect refugees must be at its core. By William Shawcross.

26

LIBERIA
When Liberian refugees fled to Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire and Sierra Leone two years ago, local villagers opened their homes to them. Now tension has begun to creep into the relationship between the refugees and their hosts. By Hiram A. Ruiz.

30

JET SET REFUGEES
Refugees still trek across desolate frontiers, but air transport is increasingly a mode of travel for people who cannot find asylum close to home. It has moved governments to take measures to stem the arrivals. By Peter Kessler.

35

MANDATE
Moments of crisis and doubt are commonly also the occasion for new religions to arise, and even a heresy or two. UNHCR, some say, needs fresh instruction from the General Assembly. By Guy S. Goodwin-Gill.

38

VIEW FROM THE PRESS GALLERY
UNHCR works in ghastly conditions bringing essential supplies to camps in places which seem life-defying. But the agency is attacked with depressing frequency by journalists. By Frances Kerry.

41

READEX FICHE

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Sister Martha Bohus
Austria

We have read very carefully your "Message" printed in the October 1991 **Refugees**. Furthermore, we would like to share the worries that you expressed in **Refugees**. This magazine should solicit diverse viewpoints on refugee matters, confronting openly and forcefully the plight of refugees. I would like to tell you that the magazine is beautifully done and allows us to use the photos and texts in our schools.

Abdul Jalil Khan
Bahrain

I want to thank you for my first issue of the magazine **Refugees**. I am writing to you from the island of Bahrain in the Persian Gulf. I don't have much money, but I would like to donate a humble amount to the cause of helping refugees. I will be sending money regularly as circumstances permit. Please accept my donation.

Mary Anne Schwalbe
Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, USA

The new issue of **Refugees** looks marvellous.

Dr. B.E. Harrell-Bond
Director, Refugees Studies Program
Oxford, United Kingdom

I am writing to congratulate your office on the production of **Refugees** magazine under its new editorial policy of providing a forum for active debate on serious refugee topics. The kind of leadership which Mrs. Ogata is injecting into the organization will go a long way towards promoting a new sense of confidence in your office, particularly among the largely voiceless constituency, the refugees themselves. I particularly appreciated the frankness of Arthur Dewey's contribution and the challenge he has posed to all the members of the UN system. Hopefully field officers all over the world will read it and begin to think again.

Prof. J. Patrnogic
Honorary President, International Institute of Humanitarian Law
Switzerland

It was truly a great pleasure to read the first issue of **Refugees** in the new format. I especially enjoyed the articles in the "Issues" section. I think that having different opinions will lead us in new directions so we will be better able to adapt to changing situations. I hope that you will open pages to outside organizations that are also working for humanitarian causes.

Elf Nass
Netherlands

This is to congratulate you on the innovations to **Refugees**. As a municipal social worker for Vietnamese refugees, your "Issues" and "Operations" are very good, strong stuff: realistic, to the point, daring. Keep going this way. Good luck, and courage to you.

Rev. Ellen Turley, Program Officer
Immigration, Refugees, Race Relations, and Criminal Justice
The United Church of Canada

I wanted to add my voice of congratulations to the many favorable comments which I have heard about the new format of your magazine. The analysis now tries to grapple with reality. Thank you for this move in the right direction.

Dr. Mario Vanden Berg
Netherlands

Congratulations on the new outfit and the forum for different views in **Refugees**.

Anne Skatvedt
Norwegian Refugee Council
Norway

Just to tell you that the Norwegian Refugee Council highly appreciates the look and the content of the new **Refugees**. The general impression is good: we appreciate the "Operations" part - and miss captions linked to the pictures.

Tesfaye Gjmariam
Sudan

We Ethiopian refugees camped in eastern Sudan thank UNHCR as we are now living normally and will return to our motherland in three days. On behalf of all Ethiopian refugees, I send this small gift *(a butterfly wall hanging-Editors)* and wish a long life to UNHCR.

Huy Nguyen
Switzerland

With the end of 1991 I would like to reaffirm my support for **Refugees** for 1992. My best wishes for your work.

UNHCR/M. Aviat

A word from **Refugees**

Refugees appreciates the kind comments of readers around the world on our new format and style. The opening of our pages to diverse viewpoints on refugee topics has sparked some controversy, which we welcome.

In order to stimulate debate, **Refugees** asks people active in refugee affairs to share their opinions on issues affecting the uprooted. We especially seek suggestions on how we and our partners can better tackle the immense problems we face today and those which we will face in the near future. Unfortunately, all too many of the contributions we receive seem written under severe diplomatic if not political constraints. Most of the articles that cross our desk tip-toe around our oversights and are incredibly polite - particularly in regard to UNHCR's competence and operational capacity.

Let **Refugees** be frank. At UNHCR, we already know how wonderful we are. But, we also know we could be better. In our last issue, we asked you to tell us the truth about our wrinkles. We meant it. So please speak your minds and send us your thoughts.

Our next issue will focus on the subject of refugees and the environment, a subject that has long deserved a much more critical examination. We will be soliciting articles from environmentalists, field workers, NGOs and refugees themselves. If you would like to share your ideas, please call or write. We'd love to hear from you.

OPERATIONS

GOING HOME

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has declared 1992 the "Year of Voluntary Repatriation." If the myriad obstacles can be overcome, dreams of home could come true for as many as 3 million refugees on five continents.

Ideally, UNHCR will launch more than 20 operations in 1992, covering the organized repatriation of 1.7 million people and assistance to an additional 720,000 who are expected to return home spontaneously. The operational budgets, estimated at $400 million in 1992, include provision for ongoing assistance to about 620,000 people who returned home in 1991 but who will need continuing aid if they are not to become refugees once again.

It will be an enormous task but one UNHCR has concluded must be undertaken quickly. With the end of the Cold War and the winding up of proxy wars, sympathy for refugees - often used as pawns in those conflicts - is disappearing as fast as their strategic value in many parts of the world.

More important, the refugees want to go home.

"In a world where most refugees are confined to overcrowded, makeshift camps in conditions as dismal - if not more dismal - than the situation they have fled, the right to return to one's homeland must be given as much recognition as the right to seek asylum abroad," High Commissioner Sadako Ogata told the 42nd Session of UNHCR's Executive Committee.

The biggest obstacle UNHCR faces in nearly every major repatriation operation is landmines - and the road home for nearly all refugees is paved with them. These landmines, and there are millions of them, maim and kill thousands each month. But there are also the figurative landmines - famine, drought, disease and often the total destruction of national infrastructure.

Another obstacle is cost although most donor nations consider repatriation operations a sound investment compared with the expense of assisting refugees in squalid camps year after year. In most cases, sending people home costs less than twice the price of maintaining them in a camp for a year.

But some donor nations fear the projects are too ambitious and UNHCR may be biting off more than it can chew, particularly with its limited staff resources.

"It will be hard to respond to so many requests for repatriation programs while at the same time reacting to the needs of new refugees," said the representative of one donor government. "We must set priorities. A smaller number of operations which succeed is better than many operations which only half work."

South Africa

Some programs are already underway, such as the voluntary repatriation of 20,000 South African exiles, most now in eight neighboring countries. Ninety percent of the proposed budget of $28.4 million has been funded, indicating donor enthusiasm.

Sweeping political change and 501 days of intense negotiations culminated last September 4 in the signing of an agreement on the exiles' return between UNHCR and the government of South Africa. UNHCR became the first United Nations agency to establish a presence in South Africa in more than 30 years.

Nearly 2,000 applications for return were cleared and more than 400 exiles flown home from Tanzania

Nasir: war drove Sudanese refugees out of their Ethiopian sanctuaries and back into Sudan

UNHCR B. Press

before the end of 1991. But the worries of the early returnees reflected those of all who contemplated going home.

"The situation is bad in South Africa," said a student on the first flight home. "But I am going home because life in exile has been very difficult for me. It's better to go home and be hungry in one's own country than somewhere else."

The exiles are returning to a country seething with political violence and in the throes of a recession. Unemployment is running at 43 percent and 84 percent of the rural population earns less than the minimum wage of $250 for a family of five. To help the returnees cope, each will receive $1,600 over six months from UNHCR.

The grants may, however, create resentment against the returnees from those who stayed behind - going to prison for their ideals and political activities against apartheid.

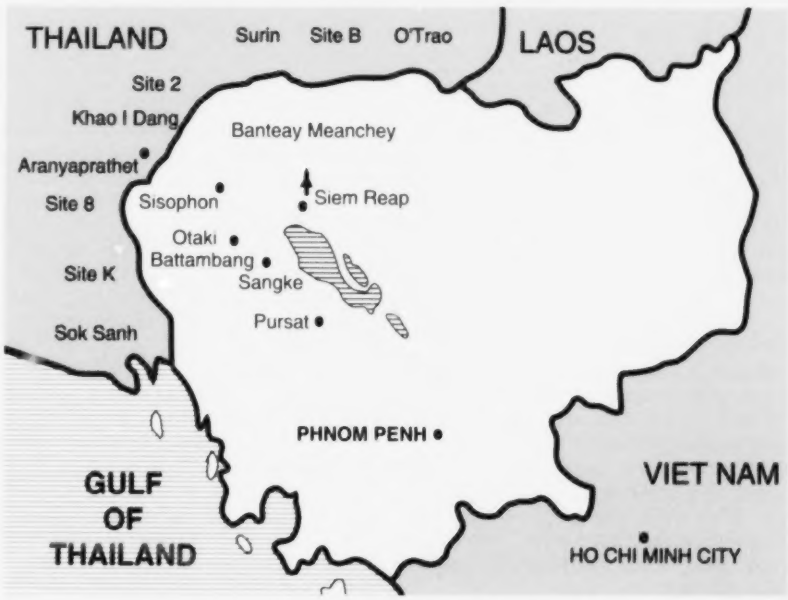
"The biggest challenge for the international community will be to satisfy the basic needs of housing, health and education of the returnees while addressing these same concerns of ex-political prisoners and the black population in the ghettos of South Africa," said Nicolas Bwakira, UNHCR regional Director for Africa. "It is important that the complexity and immensity of the task do not discourage the international community."

Cambodia

Donors consider the repatriation of 350,000 Cambodian refugees from a string of camps along the Thai border a major test of the United Nations' ability to deal with complex situations.

UNHCR hopes to complete the repatriation before elections scheduled for early 1993. To do so, UNHCR must address almost simultaneously problems of de-mining, land availability, health and security.

About 70 percent of the registered refugees want to settle in four provinces: Battambang, Banteay Meanchey, Siem Reap and Pursat. A UNHCR survey team that included de-mining experts concluded, however, that much of



the land available in these areas is mined.

After the mines that have turned Cambodia into the nation with the world's highest percentage of physically disabled inhabitants, UNHCR's most difficult mission in Cambodia will be the reintegration of a peasant returnee population that has lost its links with the land it once cultivated.

"These refugees have been spoon fed for 12 years and they are going back to the hard realities of life in Cambodia," said Sergio Vieira de Mello, the High Commissioner's Special Envoy to Cambodia. "There will be vast changes in their standards of living. Whatever we do, the returnees are bound to face frustrations."

Health is a major concern for people who have lived for the last dozen years in camps with chlorinated water and expert medical care. Inside Cambodia, doctors are few and in some areas contaminated water kills 30 percent of the children under the age of five.

And, the United Nations must confront the security problem before the refugees can return in safety. Bandits roam the countryside and many refugees are skeptical that the various factions will honor the agreement to demobilize 70 percent of their armed forces. Some refugees are fearful because they believe the factions are hiding weapons in the jungle so as not to have to surrender them to UN peacekeepers.

"I'm not sure the UN can protect people going back to Cambodia," said Mao Hop, a 39-year-old Cambodian living in Khao I Dang camp. "And once we get back, I'm afraid there won't be peace after the election."

In fact, after the Cambodia peace agreement was signed in October, some refugees started home on their own - only to return to the camps having found nothing but fear left in their villages.

UNHCR is building six reception centers inside Cambodia, way stations for the refugees' long trek home. Here, they will be given another chance to choose their final destinations - in a UNHCR-monitored, coercion-free environment. Food and building supplies, agricultural tools, seeds and, landmines permitting, title to two to three hectares of land per family will be distributed.

Projected Costs 1992 Repatriation Operations in $ US (millions)

Country of Origin	Cost
Afghanistan	24
Angola	35
Burundi	5.4
Cambodia	60
Chad	4
Eritrea	31
Ethiopia	37
Europe	2.5
Laos	5
Latin America	14.2
Liberia	30
Mozambique	22
Rwanda	8.5
Sierra Leone	8
Somalia	35
South Africa	28.4
Viet Nam	23.8
Western Sahara	31
Zaire	0.7
TOTAL	**405.5**

The Horn of Africa

As the security situation in eastern Ethiopia deteriorated late last year, the repatriation of some 500,000 Somali refugees became a matter of urgency. The $35 million program, which includes assistance for 100,000 Somalis who repatriated spontaneously in 1991, was expected to begin in February.

By late 1991, UNHCR was having difficulty getting even food supplies to the five eastern Ethiopian camps housing Somali refugees. Bandits attacked trucks, hijacked their cargo and sometimes killed drivers. Efforts to alleviate the problem by distributing food to hungry villagers along the routes to refugee camps were only occasionally successful.

The situation became so desperate that UNHCR decided to bow to refugee requests for repatriation to their war-torn homeland. Though conditions in northwestern Somalia are not nearly as bad as those in southern Somalia, still wracked by bloody clan fighting, the repatriation mission faces daunting challenges. The economy and infrastructure of northwestern

Somalia are in ruins. There are water shortages in the cities of Hargeisa, Burao and Boroma, where the majority of the returnees will go. Hundreds of thousands of mines exact a heavy toll daily.

Prospects are better for the success of the Eritrean repatriation. Since last May, a relative peace has descended on northern Ethiopia prompting thousands of Eritrean refugees to express a desire to go back to the homes they fled during the long battle for independence.

UNHCR is making arrangements for the return of 250,000 Eritreans from Sudan, which hosts an estimated 500,000, some for as long as three decades.

The opening of a UNHCR office in Asmara in November marked the start of the operation. It is expected to be completed by the spring of 1993 when a referendum on the independance of Eritrea will be held.

After a meeting with UNHCR, the provisional government of Eritrea issued assurances that every Eritrean will be allowed to return "in conditions of safety and dignity" and to contribute to its political, social and economic development.

An expected 150,000 Eritreans will go back with UNHCR assistance and another 100,000 may repatriate spontaneously but will require returnee assistance.

The operation, expected to cost $31 million in 1992, will begin early this year. Plans call for the return of 5,000 refugees in the first month, gradually increasing to as many as 20,000 per month until the rainy season begins in July.

At reception centers inside Eritrea, the returnees will be given food rations for three months and various household items.

UNHCR also hopes to resolve the plight of some 375,000 Ethiopian refugees who returned to their country in 1991, fleeing the conflict in Somalia. Security problems disrupt food distribution at reception centers and complicate plans for their final journey home.

Afghanistan

An estimated 200,000 Afghan refugees have voluntarily returned to their war-ravaged homeland over the past 18 months, many with UNHCR assistance.

But, out of a refugee population of more than 5 million, that's just a drop in the bucket.

"In any other program in the world, if in such a short time you had 200,000 people repatriating, you would say that's a terrific number," said Nicholas Morris, UNHCR Chief of Mission in Pakistan. "In absolute terms, it is terrific. But in relative terms, it's not much."

Whatever the numbers, Afghan repatriation remains a very sensitive issue.

For the refugees themselves, just making the decision to return home can be dangerous. Some Afghan leaders who have built power bases in Pakistan do not want to see that power eroded and have exerted pressure on their followers to remain in the refugee camps.

Once they leave the camps, returnees often have to run a gauntlet of unauthorized checkpoints manned by unscrupulous officials. On the Pakistani side of the border, their possessions are often illegally confiscated or bribes are extracted as payment for onward passage. Many refugees testify that they have been prevented by Pakistani security staff from crossing the frontier.

1992
PROJECTED REPATRIATION POPULATIONS

Country of Origin	Number	Country of Asylum
Afghanistan	200,000	Iran, Pakistan
Angola	300,000	Zaire, Zambia
Burundi	100,000	Tanzania, Zaire
Cambodia	350,000	Thailand
Chad	20,000	Sudan
El Salvador	3,000	Belize, Costa Rica, Honduras, Nicaragua,Panama
Ethiopia	425,000	(returnees)
	12,000	Djibouti, Kenya
Ethiopia-Eritrea	250,000	Sudan
Guatemala	10,000	Mexico
Laos	8,000	Thailand
Liberia	430,000	Ghana, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Nigeria, Sierra Leone
Mozambique	135,000	Malawi, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe
Nicaragua	5,500	Costa Rica, other
Rwanda	55,000	Burundi, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Zaire
Sierra Leone	170,000	Guinea
Somalia	400,000	Ethiopia, Djibouti, Kenya and others
South Africa	20,000	Tanzania, Zambia, other
Suriname	6,600	French Guyana
Vietnam	20,000	Hong Kong, Indonesia, Thailand, other
Zaire	2,000	Angola
Western Sahara	80,000	Algeria, Mauritania
TOTAL	**3,002,100**	

Opting to go home: Afghan refugees in Pakistan

And once they cross the border, returnees can run into the same thing on the other side. Afghan officials at checkpoints often stop young men of military age and force them into the army.

Once they overcome the many perils of departure and transit, returnees still must confront the dangers of a war that has turned much of the country into a wasteland. Fighting still rages over a wide area, with front lines shifting almost continually.

"So what are the incentives for the people to go back? Very, very little," said Bo Elding, executive director of the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan.

Mark Ice, UNHCR repatriation officer in Peshawar, Pakistan, expressed amazement that any Afghans have gone back at all.

"The devastation in Afghanistan is massive," Ice said. "There is every reason not to go back and it's impressive that so many have."

Chief of Mission Morris said: "Our policy is that until there is a real move toward peace in Afghanistan, we shouldn't be pushing people to go back. But there are people who do want to go back and we try to facilitate their return."

For the refugees themselves, just making the decision to return home can be dangerous.

Delays

The resumption of hostilities in some countries will delay a number of repatriation programs. Others may never get off the ground because of political instability, worsening economic conditions and problems relating to infrastructure.

And, there are always the mines. For example, the civil war in Angola left behind a considerable number of mines that must be cleared before any large-scale repatriation of the 300,000 Angolan refugees scattered in neighboring countries.

Even when there are no political or security constraints, some repatriation operations may be thwarted by an unwillingness of refugees to pull up roots yet again. Many of the estimated 590,000 Rwandan refugees probably will not opt to return to their country. Most have been living in Burundi, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zaire for many years and have become quite settled in their countries of asylum.

OPERATIONS

DE-MINING

Cambodian refugee Ri Wat Thui doesn't have to look far to see the horrible and often deadly effects of land mines.

Hundreds of Thui's neighbors in the sprawling Site B refugee camp have been maimed by mines, and more victims are brought across the Thai-Cambodian border almost daily for treatment in the camp hospital. Many of the victims bleed to death, before they can receive help. Others arrive suffering from often fatal gas gangrene brought on by the long journey through the jungle. The lucky ones just lose a foot or a hand.

Like refugees from Angola to Afghanistan to El Salvador and Somalia, Thui knows that a signed

peace agreement isn't going to protect him or his family from land mines left by departing troops.

"We have been told that there is a plan for us to go back to Cambodia," Thui said of the comprehensive peace settlement signed in October by the four warring Cambodian factions. "I want to go back, but if the situation is not safe, I won't. I'm afraid of mines."

As far as Thui is concerned, the Cambodian peace settlement isn't worth the paper it's written on if it means he could still be blown up by a long-forgotten land mine planted in a remote rice paddy or along a quiet jungle trail.

The shooting may have stopped, but hundreds of thousands of mines - perhaps millions - remain scattered across Cambodia, a hidden deadly remnant of 13 years of war. They include everything from large anti-tank mines buried deep beneath jungle tracks, roads and highways, to tiny anti-personnel mines that are blown about by the wind and carried by the monsoon rains.

Handicap International, a French relief organization, estimates between 200 and 300 Cambodians a month lose limbs to mines and an equal number may be losing their lives. In the Thai camps, there are at least 5,000 amputees. There are another 20,000 to 35,000 in Cambodia, perhaps the largest concentration of handicapped in the world. Many of them have been forced to become beggars and petty criminals to survive.

UN and other relief officials warn that mining is so extensive in Cambodia that it could derail plans to repatriate the more than 350,000 Cambodian refugees currently living in the Thai camps.

Under a plan to be carried out by UNHCR, each of the estimated 50,000 families taking part in the return will get two to three hectares of land. Selection of the required land is being aided by the French SPOT IMAGE satellite, which has provided 70 computer-enhanced maps of the region. But the satellite photos cannot

locate mines. That has to be done on the ground in a slow, dangerous and painstaking operation that could take months, if not years.

"The reality of the situation is we have very little expertise available in the world in regard to humanitarian de-mining," said Jamshid Anvar, Director of UNHCR's Bureau for Asia and Oceania. "It is unlikely that the question of mines will be resolved in a few months. It will take years, if not decades. In Europe, mines from World War I are still being discovered."

"Mining is a problem we have to face," added Yvette Stevens, Chief of UNHCR's Program and Technical Support Section. "We can say we are not responsible for de-mining, but we can't return people to areas that are mined."

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Sadako Ogata agreed and named a top aide, Sergio Vieira de Mello, her Special Envoy for Cambodia, with instructions to make mine-clearance a priority.

A recent report by two human rights organizations, Asia Watch and Physicians for Human Rights, said preparations for de-mining in Cambodia were woefully inadequate and warned that unless mine clearance begins immediately, any large-scale repatriation of refugees would be a disaster.

The report, entitled "Land Mines in Asia, the Coward's War," quoted a mine-removal team funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development as saying it had dealt with 6,000 anti-personnel mines in a stretch of less than half a mile in western Cambodia.

"Land-mine explosions have already given Cambodia the highest percentage of physically disabled inhabitants of any country in the world," the report said. "Mine accidents now rank with malaria and tuberculosis as one of Cambodia's three greatest public health hazards."

The London-based HALO Trust (Hazardous Areas Life-support Organization) conducted a three-month survey in Cambodia and estimated there were at least 400,000 land mines in Siem Reap, Battambang, Banteay Meanchey and Pursat provinces alone. The voluntary agency said it expected to start clearing mines by February.

A spokesman for HALO Trust said his team had learned to detect a type of explosive plastic mine impervious to metal-detectors. "We're now able to detect the almost all-plastic Chinese Type 72 Frog mine," he said. About the size of a round tobacco tin and pale green in color, the mine is designed to maim rather than kill.

Unfortunately, armies are much better at planting mines than they are at removing them. And in Cambodia, there were at least four different armies scattering the devices almost at random.

The Cambodian de-mining program is expected to draw upon lessons already learned in another heavily mined battleground where a war is still raging - Afghanistan.

No one knows exactly how many mines have been planted in Afghanistan, but estimates range from a minimum of 2 million to as many as 30 million. As in Cambodia, the vast majority of refugees refuse to return to the war-torn nation until they are convinced that peaceful zones have been cleared of mines.

Martin Barber, Chief of Mission for the UN Coordinator's Office for Assistance to Afghanistan (UNOCA), said more than 2,000 people are currently employed in de-mining activities and education in Afghanistan.

"It's essential that we use (in Cambodia) some of the lessons we've learned here," Barber said in his office in Islamabad, Pakistan. "We've operated from the start with military engineers seconded to us by various nations. At one point, we had more than 100 military people from Australia, Canada, France, Italy, Norway, Turkey, the United

UNHCR A Hollmann

A million mines keep this workshop for handicapped Somali refugees in Ethiopia busy

De-mining training for Afghan refugees in Pakistan: no one knows how many mines

Kingdom, the United States and New Zealand."

UNOCA, using mine-sniffing dogs from Thailand, has also had some success detecting insidious plastic mines.

"We use Thai dogs and Afghan handlers who speak to them in Thai," Barber said. "The really sophisticated mines - many of them Italian or Soviet - have very little metal content. There are certain very sophisticated mine detectors, too. But if you have an Italian TC-6 anti-tank mine, which is all plastic except for one small metal pin, buried more than two feet underground, the only way you can find it is with a dog."

The dogs are usually used in pairs, working back and forth along narrow strips of land or roadway. When the animals smell explosives, they sit down and wait for their handler to mark the spot. An expert then gently prods the area with a long rod until the mine is located and can be unearthed.

Anti-personnel mines are normally located on or near the surface and are generally found with mine detectors and manual prodding.

Barber said UNOCA has also experimented with flails, or automatic de-mining machines. The British-built flail is basically a bulldozer with huge chains attached to a rotating drum that batters the ground and blows up mines. "Unfortunately, they break down often," Barber said.

But despite some success, the Afghan de-mining operation has barely scratched the surface - like a similar program in northwest Somalia.

Since November 1991, UNHCR has spent some $500,000 to equip 220 Somali volunteers in a mine detection, removal and disposal program originally funded by USAID and the EC and run by Rimfire, a British explosives disposal firm.

In their first months of work, the de-mining teams destroyed some 3,500 anti-personnel mines, more than 1,200 anti-tank mines and dozens of missiles, shells and bombs.

UNHCR wants to speed up the de-mining operation around the northwestern city of Hargeisa and Burao in 1992. An additional $2.6 million has been proposed for the project. But prospects for clearing the estimated 1 million mines before the 500,000 refugees return home are dim.

"I don't think even with a thousand people you could guarantee northwest Somalia free of mines in 10 years," said Rimfire consultant Michael Fellows.

For refugees like Thui who want desperately to go home, the sad truth remains that most mines will be found by people stepping on them.

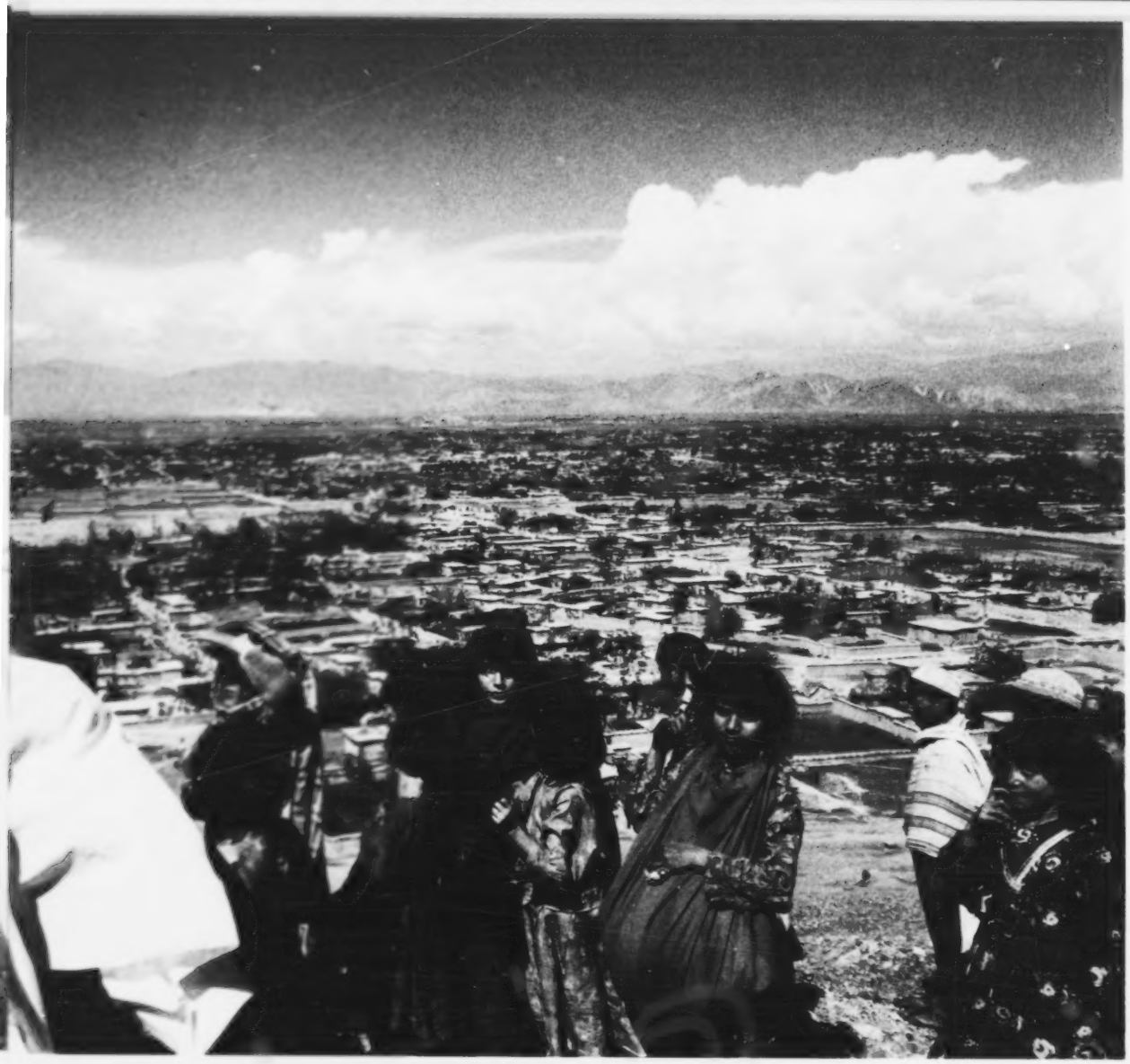
OPERATIONS

AFGHANISTAN: A SAD LEGACY OF THE COLD WAR

Shah Mahmood pointed at a group of Afghan refugee boys and lamented the loss of an entire generation.

"In the 13 years we have been here in Pakistan, our children could have grown up to become doctors and lawyers," said the 54-year-old teacher at the Hawai No. 8 refugee camp. "But all they've done is sit here in the dust. It is such a waste."

Thirteen years after the bloodshed began and nearly three years after the withdrawal of Soviet forces from their homeland, the world's largest refugee population continues to languish in hundreds of



UNHCR/A. Hollmann

An entire generation of Afghans is lost in the dust of refugee camps

dusty camps and villages in Pakistan and Iran. Despite all the talk of a new World Order, few of them expect to go home anytime soon.

Five million in all – 3 million in Pakistan and 2 million in Iran – the refugees are a sad legacy of the Cold War, their plight slowly fading from international consciousness. No longer of much concern to the superpowers, the Afghan war is turning into a faction-plagued regional conflict that some analysts fear could go on for years to come.

And if it does, what will become of the refugees? Can the international community, constrained by dwindling resources and confronted with new problems elsewhere in the world, be expected to continue its support of Afghan refugees indefinitely?

In a September visit to Pakistan, Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees Douglas Stafford assured Afghan refugees that they can depend on UNHCR's support until they can repatriate safely or until the circumstances that led them to become refugees cease to exist. But Stafford also warned that the care and maintenance program in Pakistan cannot continue indefinitely. Stafford said he hoped developments in Afghanistan would soon allow all refugees to repatriate in safety, and reiterated that UNHCR would assist those who wish to go home now even though the war has not ended.

Although recent political developments have raised hopes for a settlement between moderate Mujahedeen factions and the Kabul government, few are predicting that peace is about to break out in Afghanistan. Such optimistic predictions were made after the 1988 Geneva Accords that led to the Soviet withdrawal. At that time, UNHCR and other organizations put detailed plans in place for a massive repatriation and

rehabilitation program for Afghanistan. Funds were solicited and millions of dollars worth of supplies purchased in anticipation of an end to the conflict. Nothing happened.

Today the fighting goes on and most of the refugees quite justifiably refuse to go home.

Nicholas Morris, UNHCR's Chief of Mission in Pakistan, says donor fatigue and frustration may be building up, "but we're not seeing it here yet."

"Nevertheless, UNHCR has been reassessing its program in Pakistan," Morris said.

"UNHCR realizes there are other, new priorities in the world," he said. "We are doing a reassessment of the program to make sure that it's as effective and as credible as possible. We have to make sure it meets the needs of the most vulnerable Afghan refugees, but we also have obligations to other refugees elsewhere and to our donors."

Self-sufficiency of Afghan refugees will remain a guiding theme in UNHCR assistance programs.

Discussions are also under way with the government of Pakistan to further rationalize the assistance program through the consolidation of camps, staff reductions and integration of services within regular government agencies.

Efforts are under way to conduct an accurate count of refugees so that the rationalization program can be carried out fairly and effectively. Some experts believe the refugee population in Baluchistan province, for example, may be only half the current estimate of 850,000.

But attempts to conduct a head count have been hampered by some refugees who have refused to cooperate and, in some cases, actually threatened census takers. The government has stated its firm intention to undertake the census.

Some critics say a census will not accurately reflect camp populations.

"The refugees maintain that these missing people actually still live in the camps but have gone to the cities to eke out a living because the two food commodities they now get from UNHCR aren't enough to sustain them," said Matiullah Khan, joint secretary with the States and Frontier Regions Division of the government of Pakistan. Khan noted that the number of commodities provided to refugees has declined from six to two over the years, and that rations of the two remaining commodities - wheat and edible oil - have been reduced.

A joint food assessment mission involving UNHCR, the World Food Program and the government of Pakistan in May 1990 determined that

food rations could be cut because an increasing number of refugees had reached some degree of self-sufficiency. At the same time, the total number of beneficiaries was increased by including some previously unregistered refugees. Though the net result was that more food was shipped to Pakistan than before, the decision to cut monthly wheat rations from 15 kgs per person to 12 kgs and edible oil from 900 grams to 600 grams, was a controversial one.

"There is evidence some refugees have access to the employment market, and at least one able-bodied man in the family goes to work," said one relief official. "But the question is, what about those families who don't have able-bodied men around? And there are a lot of them."

Refugees in several camps visited recently complained of the ration cuts. "People have been coming to me with nothing," said Masul Khan, a refugee leader at the Hawai No. 8 camp. "Many say they go to bed hungry, or spend an entire day without eating. Health surveys show there is an increase in malnourished children."

UNHCR says this needs to be verified, as the recent study used a methodology different from that used in earlier surveys.

But UNHCR and Pakistan officials agree there have been abuses of the system, with some refugees and Pakistanis holding hundreds of bogus family ration cards.

A census would help curb these abuses and ensure that each family - especially those most vulnerable - receives the proper amount of food each month. "But if we can't identify the vulnerable groups, then we can't cut the food rations," one official said. Some refugees and Pakistani officials believe the rations cuts are an attempt to put pressure on the refugees to return home despite the continued fighting.

"At one time, I thought this was some kind of political squeeze," said Gulzar Khan, refugee commissioner for Pakistan's North West Frontier Province. "But I don't know if any progressive squeezing of Afghan refugees will actually lead to peace."

Water distribution to Afghan refugees in the Punjab: few expect to go home soon

UNHCR/A. Hollmann

UNHCR/A. Hollmann

Refugee embroidery project: helping Afghans find self-sufficiency

Khan said UNHCR's fear of donor fatigue was more perception than reality. "It is a perception that has translated into policy," he said. "It is not reality."

Khan said some people also view the assistance cuts as a form of pressure on Pakistan, which has supported the Afghan resistance from the start.

"There was at one time a general feeling among some that peace is not wanted by Pakistan," he said. "If not actually said openly, I could at least read between the lines. It was thought that pressure could be put on Pakistan by cutting aid to the refugees. That simply is not correct. Unless the Afghans realize they can go back to certain safety and self-sufficiency, it will be difficult for the government or Mujahedeen leaders to get them to go back."

Khan said many refugees now feel abandoned by the Western powers, and believe they were "used" as a proxy force to fight Soviet troops.

"The refugees say, 'You wanted us to fight the Russians for you, and as soon as they are out of the way you want to scale down assistance to us'," Khan said.

"To a very large extent, the assistance to Afghan refugees all these years was politically motivated," he continued. "We all know that the refugees were also Mujahedeen, but we tried our level best to create this fiction of some sort of separation between the two. It is unfortunate the whole issue has become so politicized."

Most officials agreed that as long as the superpower rivalry raged in Afghanistan, the assistance program in Pakistan was governed more by geopolitical concerns than by need or credibility.

"Major donors ordered increases in refugee programs with no concern for effectiveness," one official said. "This has not been a program whose level of donor support was governed by credibility."

But now that the superpowers have largely withdrawn, the writing is on the wall. The Cold War is over and the world's attention is focused elsewhere. Something must be done soon, before another generation of Afghan children goes to waste in the dust of a forgotten refugee camp.

SLAMMING DOORS

Thach Ven ought to consider himself in good company, right up there with Albert Einstein, Philippine President Corazon Aquino and Russian writer Alexander Solzhenitsyn.

Like them, Thach has spent a good deal of his adult life as a refugee. But while Einstein, Aquino and Solzhenitsyn were welcomed with open arms by the international community, Thach has had the door slammed in his face at nearly every turn.

Nine years after fleeing Viet Nam to the sprawling Site 2 camp on the Thai-Cambodian border, Thach has yet to find a country willing to accept him for resettlement.

"I can't go home," said Thach, a member of Viet Nam's minority Khmer Krom ethnic group who had to flee in 1982 when he was accused of supporting non-communist guerrillas. "I want to be resettled in another country, but no one will take me."

It is a story heard over and over again in refugee camps and at border crossings around the world.

Fearing an uncontrollable influx of people from underdeveloped nations, more and more wealthy countries are pulling in the welcome mat. Even the right to seek asylum, one of civilization's oldest and most honored principles, is under threat almost everywhere.

Thach is one of more than 17 million refugees worldwide, people

Swastika on a wall in Europe: increasing manifestations of racism

UNHCR / Dagnino

who are outside their countries of origin because of well-founded fears for their lives and liberty. The vast majority of them are living in squalid camps and villages in Third World nations, the very countries which can least afford to help them. At least 15 million more people are believed internally displaced within their own countries because of civil war, famine and other disasters, most of them also in the Third World.

Like Thach, every refugee has a tragic story to tell - of persecution, of war and violence, of the loss of home, family and country.

Increasingly, it is also a story of rejection by an international community that has become weary of caring for the growing numbers of dispossessed.

Last year, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees spent about $980 million caring for the world's refugees, money that many governments felt could have been better used at home. If donor governments can't take care of the homeless on their own streets, the argument goes, why should they be responsible for the world's homeless?

Making matters worse, hundreds of thousands of people from poor nations are flocking to the North and West not because of persecution, but because of poverty and the desire for a better job. These so-called economic migrants often abuse the asylum process with fraudulent claims, clogging the asylum pipeline and making it increasingly difficult for political refugees to get a fair hearing.

Despite the much-heralded promise of a new era of peace and prosperity brought on by the end of the Cold War, many of the root causes of the global refugee problem persist - regional conflicts and civil wars; human rights abuses; the growing economic disparity between North and South and East and West; government incompetence and corruption; environmental degradation; famine, drought and other natural disasters.

Add to these perennial problems the recent rise in nationalism and the disintegration of countries like Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union, and the flood of refugees threatens to turn into a virtual torrent.

To avoid these unprecedented mass movements, some experts are now calling for a reassessment of the way the international community deals with the refugee problem. They say that instead of waiting for people to be displaced, international organizations led by the United Nations should be concentrating on removing root causes - such as violations of basic human rights and extreme poverty - within the countries of origin. But doing so would require vast amounts of foreign development aid in a world of shrinking resources.

In the meantime, the rich nations of the North and West can be expected to further tighten their immigration laws and to take a much harder look at those claiming to be refugees.

Western Europe is already doing so. Although a much-feared mass migration from Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union has so far failed to materialize, wealthy European nations are struggling with hundreds of thousands of economic migrants from North Africa and the Middle East who arrived under the guise of political asylum. These migrants have tied up the already lengthy asylum process, bringing calls for speedier and more strict enforcement so those failing to qualify as refugees can be returned as soon as possible.

For all of Western Europe, the number of these asylum-seekers has risen from 14,000 a year in 1973 to 440,000 in 1990, and it continues to climb. European Community governments are especially concerned about controlling population movements after 1992, when markets and borders will be opened within the entire 12-nation bloc.

UN High Commissioner for Refugees Sadako Ogata acknowledges there may be a threat to the stability of individual nations by the unchecked mass movement of people across borders. But she warns that the new fortress Europe mentality also poses a threat to the principle of asylum.

"As the world goes through momentous change, we are faced with a major dilemma," Mrs. Ogata said in a recent speech at the Vatican. "How do we preserve the traditions of humanitarianism and asylum, how do we treat humanely all those who arrive at our borders, without at the same time jeopardizing the safety and stability of our own societies?"

It is a question governments around the world are grappling with, and so far there are very few answers.

The right to seek asylum, one of civilization's oldest and most honored principles, is under threat almost everywhere.

Complicating Europe's problems is a continuing labor shortage that some demographers predict will require the importation of hundreds of thousands of foreign workers for years to come. Although their economic well-being may be dependent on these migrant workers, many Europeans are convinced that their national identities, cultures and jobs are threatened by foreigners. In several nations, this fear has given rise to increasing xenophobia and racism.

The problem is so widespread that at its December Maastricht summit, the European Council issued a

Strict controls at American border town: widespread fear that foreigners threaten jobs and national cultures

declaration noting its "concern that manifestations of racism and xenophobia are steadily growing in Europe."

"The European Council ... expresses its revulsion against racist sentiments and manifestations. These manifestations, including expressions of prejudice and violence against foreign immigrants and exploitation of them, are unacceptable," the declaration said.

The council urged member states to "act clearly and unambiguously to counter the growth of sentiments and manifestations of racism and xenophobia."

In Germany, the domestic counterintelligence service reported more than 1,000 attacks by neo-Nazis and skinheads against foreigners last year. In October, the first anniversary of German unification was marred by hundreds of such attacks, with young thugs burning down immigrant hostels and staging angry marches demanding a Germans-only Germany.

Similar attacks on refugees have taken place in Sweden, long considered one of the most hospitable havens for the dispossessed.

Many Europeans are convinced that their national identities, cultures and jobs are threatened by foreigners... this fear has given rise to increasing xenophobia and racism.

In Austria, the far-right Freedom Party has ridden a wave of anti-immigrant and anti-Jewish sentiment to strong showings in three recent elections.

"Twenty to 30 percent of the Austrian population have negative views of foreigners, including Jews," Austria's Gallup Institute reported in November.

In France, the xenophobic National Front continues to gain popularity in the polls, and even mainstream politicians are now calling for mass deportations and tighter curbs on immigration.

In Britain, the Conservative government recently announced plans to curb the entry of bogus asylum-seekers by speeding up the review process so as to reduce a backlog of more than 60,000 cases. More than 60 percent of those cases involve immigrants from Africa, and around 20 percent are from South Asia. The number of asylum applicants in Britain has grown tenfold in the last three

years, to an estimated 50,000 annually.

In Italy, thousands of Albanians were forcibly returned home during the summer despite suspicions that some may have been legitimate refugees.

Hostility toward asylum-seekers isn't confined to Europe, however.

Within hours of Italy's forced return of Albanians, for example, Malaysia claimed the right to do the same to Vietnamese boat people in its territory. The Malaysians, who came under very heavy international criticism in the 1980s when they turned away boat people, pointedly asked why the international community had remained silent when rich donor countries like Italy refused entry to asylum seekers.

In Hong Kong, tens of thousands of Vietnamese boat people found to be economic migrants face return because they do not qualify for refugee status and no other country will have them. Fewer than 20 percent of the 62,000 boat people currently languishing in Hong Kong's crowded detention centers have been able to pass a UN-approved screening process for refugees.

Hong Kong government officials have warned that the policy of first asylum - allowing would-be refugees ashore until they can be screened - may be revoked if the influx of economic migrants continues. The problem was further exacerbated earlier last year when thousands of Vietnamese were found to be making the trip to Hong Kong solely to take advantage of a UNHCR program begun as an incentive to voluntary repatriation. The program paid $410 - twice the annual salary of a Vietnamese civil servant - to anyone who requested voluntary repatriation to Viet Nam. UNHCR suspended the incentive program in September.

Canada, grappling with a backlog of refugee claimants, is considering legislative changes to better screen applicants, boost the enforcement power of immigration officers and increase the ability to deport those found ineligible for refugee status. About 5,000 bogus claimants are expected to be deported this year.

The United States, which prides itself on its heritage as a haven for the world's dispossessed and downtrodden, is accused of applying its asylum policies unevenly. While Washington criticizes Hong Kong for forcibly repatriating Vietnamese boat people, the United States has for years been doing the same thing to asylum seekers from Central America and the Caribbean.

"At least the Vietnamese can get into Hong Kong for first asylum," said Maurice Belanger, a spokesman for National Forum, a refugee advocacy group in Washington, D.C. "Haitian boat people can't even get to the U.S. coast before they're intercepted."

UNHCR/A. Hollmann

Vietnamese boat people in Hong Kong: no other country will have them

Albanians in Italy: easier to find sanctuary during the Cold War

In November, thousands of Haitians who fled their homeland in small boats following a coup against the island nation's democratically elected government were held for days aboard Coast Guard cutters while U.S. officials tried to find other countries that would take them.

The U.S. vessels returned 538 Haitians back to their country before a Miami court ordered a temporary halt to the forced repatriation.

Cheryl Little, an attorney with the Haitian Refugee Center in Miami, said Washington was trying to deny first asylum to the Haitians because of fears it would trigger a new wave of boat people.

Bill Frelick, an asylum specialist with the private U.S. Committee for Refugees in Washington, D.C., called the treatment of Haitians "blatant racism" and one more example of the disregard many Western governments now have for the principle of asylum.

Some experts are now calling for a reassessment of the way the international community deals with the refugee problem.

Frelick said Western countries were more than willing during the Cold War to grant asylum to the trickle of refugees who managed to escape East Bloc nations.

"It was easy to grant asylum back in the Cold War days when you only had 10 Albanians a year leaving Albania," Frelick said.

"But we've clearly entered a new era where we no longer have a Cold War or the ideologically fuelled humanitarian response that it once generated."

"The trend we see now is to run roughshod over the rights of due process."

RON REDMOND
Pacific Rim Correspondent
Seattle Post-Intelligencer

ISSUES

MASS MIGRATION AND THE GLOBAL VILLAGE

We are now at an extraordinary moment in history. The Cold War has ended. And with it, the structures and strictures of 40 years have ended too.

One American policy maker, Francis Fukuyama, went so far as to exult that this meant the end of history. That seemed to me to be premature. In a more considered approach, he said that there would now be three main issues facing the world - oil, terrorism and refugees. There are others too, in my view. But the issue of refugees is central to the way the world works. If there really is to be a New World Order, in President Bush's phrase, then how to handle and to protect refugees must be at its core.

Each refugee situation must be looked at on its merits. In each case, the solution is different. In the vast majority of cases, refugees would prefer to go home. They have been forced out. So that a key issue in this debate is how to create conditions for their return home.

Africa is the most powerful example of where any New World Order must deal with the growing disparity of wealth amongst nations. Unless that disparity is reversed, refugees will continue to travel. The 80s saw marvellous things, like the collapse of communism. But the countries from which most refugees now come, become poorer and poorer. The industrialized world of North America, Europe, Japan and its Asian followers, Australia, are part of the prosperous global market - prosperous even though this is a time of recession. But that market embraces a tiny minority of the people of the world.

The chasm between rich and poor will be greater at the end of this century than it was at the beginning. The poor countries of the world, particularly those of Africa, are in a new condition. They are not exploited. They are becoming superfluous. Silicon chips are made from sand - there is no longer much need for the raw materials which the Third World once relied upon exporting.

There is no place in the global market for these people. Where the market reigns, the consumer is king. Those who cannot consume have no voice. A new Berlin wall is being built around them. But just as those behind the Berlin Wall knew more and more about the reality of life beyond, so the growing numbers of increasingly poor in Asia, Latin America, India and even China will become increasingly aware of the wealth in the North.

As there is less and less need for their produce, and they become less and less able to afford the products of the rich, so-called global market, their despair and their anger will become the greater. Denied the right to participate in the new religion of consumerism, they may turn to fundamentalism of one sort or another, or to terrorism or to both.

This tendency will be increased by the spread of Western culture, especially through television. While images of Third World suffering are

beamed up and down on us, leading to the pernicious new 20th century disease of "compassion fatigue," images of First World plenty in the TV shows "Neighbours," "Dallas" and "Dynasty" are shoved down the starving throats of the poor.

Today, Western culture is a global culture. No one else has invented a better idea than liberal democracy, capitalism, blue jeans, the microchip and Coca-Cola. Some of us who are able to enjoy such benefits may not wish to do so. But we should not deny their pulling power for those who have so far only glimpsed them.

Our world is more and more tightly and inextricably intertwined, if only by satellites. Our culture is meant to be commercially enticing. That is a basis of the capitalist ethic. And yet, now we find ourselves in the awful position of punishing, abusing and abjuring those who are attracted by the idea of living in Orange County, California. Another banker, Walter Wriston, pointed out several years ago, "Far too many of the world's people have now seen what the global shopping center holds in store for them. They will not easily accept having the door slammed shut by nationalism." The attraction of the developed world is bound to increase. This is not only because more people will know about it, but also because conditions in much of the rest of the world are likely to deteriorate.

There is no place in the global market for these people. Those who cannot consume have no voice.

Now at the end of the Cold War, tensions between nations are in fact increased, not diminished.

In Europe, all bets are now uncertain. With the breakup of the Soviet Union and the states of Eastern Europe, we can expect massive movements of people, some forced, some voluntary. The pall of communism has been lifted and Europe's past, with all its glory and all its pain, is re-emerging blinking in the light.

Thousands upon thousands of people who had been compelled to

stay where they were are now on the move. Between 5 and 6 million people are expected to try and leave what was the Soviet Union. They will first of all invade Eastern Europe, whose problems are already immense.

There are expected to be 35 million unemployed when the members of the former Soviet Union really adopt a market economy.

The New World Order must face the problems of mass migration which is different from but associated with refugees. Economic migrants are not refugees. But there is a tendency amongst Western governments to denounce all refugees as mere economic migrants, and therefore an underclass of people with absolutely no privileges.

This is intolerable for two reasons. It encourages governments to deny the human rights of such people. And it encourages us to believe that there is a hard and fast distinction between refugees and mere economic migrants. There is not always. Consider, for example, Jewish merchants who fled from Central Europe in the early and mid-30s when their businesses were clearly threatened but often before their lives were endangered.

The international economic system has to be addressed.

One vast problem is that market economies have worked for the West because the resources of much of the planet have been pressed into their service. Already, the earth's resources and environment are stretched beyond endurance. How can they sustain the voraciousness of real markets developing amongst the millions who have until now been denied them? Indeed, the impoverishment of the South, through debt financing alone, has itself been a factor in the enrichment of the North. To pay that debt, more and more of the environment of the poor countries is being sacrificed. Hardwoods, fish, forests for grazing land - all are being pawned or virtually given away.

The gulf between rich and poor has grown tremendously during the 80s. According to a UNHCR report, the prospects for the 800 million absolute poor are worse than ever. Per capita income in sub-Saharan Africa will revert to the 1960s level by 1995.

So what is to be done?

First, governments must take seriously the UNHCR. This office, created after the second World War, is the most important organization dealing with refugees throughout the world.

The High Commissioner's tasks are to protect refugees in the place where they have taken first asylum, to

assist them with food, clothing and medical care, and thirdly to find a long-term solution for them. Protection is the core of its mandate. That is what the world gave it in the 1950s and the need is just as great - numerically much greater - today. Despite its faults, the High Commissioner's office is vital to millions of refugees and is the only spokesman they have in the councils of the powerful. It helps to civilize governments.

Secondly, the economic, political and social problems of the First World cannot be denied. The industrialized countries cannot forever accept unlimited immigration. But those problems do not render asylum an optional, casual, arbitrary act of generosity.

Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that "Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution." That right is arguably one of the oldest recognized human rights. But today it is becoming increasingly vulnerable.

Furthermore, there is an element of crying wolf in the developed world. The EEC is building barriers against refugees yet the overwhelming majority of them are moving from the world's poorest nations to the worlds poorest nations.

We are now at an extraordinarily hopeful moment. Communism has ended in Europe and dictatorship is ending in Africa. People are now freer than they have been for decades. That striving for freedom and for dignity is universal. It is felt in Cambodia, in Viet Nam, in Somalia, in Burma, in El Salvador, in Sudan, in Nicaragua. Now that the Cold War has been won, it is absolutely essential that the industrialized nations do not sit back in complacency. The cliche of the "Global Village" is now becoming a truism for much of the world.

If the phrase, "The New World Order," is to have any significance, it must mean that refugees are no longer seen and treated as pawns. Their crisis is at center stage. Their agony has to be assuaged and solved. This must be done for reasons of morality and humanity. It must also be done for reasons of security and self-interest. If the homes from which millions of people now flee are not made habitable, then the pressure upon the richer world will become quite intolerable.

WILLIAM SHAWCROSS
Author
Quality of Mercy

ISSUES

LIBERIA: THE HONEYMOON IS OVER

When Liberian refugees first fled to Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, and Sierra Leone beginning late December 1989, local people in villages and towns in those countries opened their homes to them. Even in a continent where, despite the poverty of host countries, refugees have generally been welcomed by their neighbors, the hospitality shown to Liberian refugees was virtually unprecedented.

All along the borders, individual families took in refugees, shared their meager food supplies with them, and often gave them land they could farm. Schools and other public buildings were turned into makeshift group homes. Local health services, already overstretched, were extended to the refugees.

As a result, Liberian refugees, unlike most refugees worldwide, did not wind up living in refugee camps, but "cohabitating" (as it is referred to in the region) with the local people in the countries of asylum. As one local relief worker described it, "This was the glorious time. The Liberians were received as brothers, not as refugees."

This generosity proved fortuitous in more ways than one. First, it provided the refugees with

Building a home in Côte d'Ivoire: local people generous with materials

Refugees and their hosts share a hut: a more human environment than a camp

UNHCR/J. Cop

food and shelter in a more human environment than a refugee camp. However, it also helped make up for the fact that the initial response of the international community – including UNHCR – to the Liberian refugee emergency was slow and inadequate. Had it not been for the actions of the Guinean, Ivorian, and Sierra Leonean people, we could have witnessed a major tragedy in West Africa.

To be fair, there were mitigating circumstances. This region of West Africa did not have a history of refugee flows. Therefore, the UNHCR presence in the region was minimal, and many of the other international and non-governmental agencies that often respond in emergencies were also not present.

In the case of Côte d'Ivoire, the more prosperous (and best able to respond) of the three countries into which large numbers of Liberians fled, the government, at the beginning of the influx, chose to handle the situation by itself, and did not extend an invitation to UNHCR to assist.

The initial response of the international community - including UNHCR - to the Liberian refugee emergency was slow and inadequate.

Nevertheless, in the case of all three countries, it was many months before anything resembling an effective international response was mounted.

Now, it has been nearly two years since Liberian refugees first fled. According to the latest counts, there are some 566,000 refugees in Guinea (397,000 Liberians and 169,000 Sierra Leoneans), and 240,000 in Côte d'Ivoire (almost all the Liberian refugees who were living in Sierra Leone fled that country too when Liberian rebels invaded Sierra Leone). Some of the refugees are still cohabitating with their local hosts, and there are many at all levels of the relief effort who believe that the arrangement continues to work well. But a closer inspection reveals mounting tension and friction and a growing acknowledgement that, as might be expected, the cohabitation honeymoon is over.

Surprisingly, the tension appears more pronounced in Côte d'Ivoire, where there were fewer ini-

tial problems (although many of the same problems that exist in Côte d'Ivoire - as well as some unique ones - are also found in Guinea). A UNHCR official in Côte d'Ivoire says, "The cohabitation is still going well, but is tending to become more strained."

The top local official in the Ivorian prefecture of Danane takes a similar position. While emphasizing the positive, he admits that there are tensions, saying, "even in families there are problems." An Ivorian official in Abidjan adds that some of her colleagues are becoming more negative about the refugees' presence. "Everywhere I hear, 'When will the refugees go?', or, 'They are a burden'," she says.

The problems are least noticeable in the villages nearest the border with Liberia. There, many of the refugees and locals, whose villages are in close proximity, are not only of the same ethnic groups, they are often related or have known each other most of their lives.

In the village of Belegleu, about 45 minutes from Danane and just a few miles from the Liberian border, a refugee woman named Annie, who fled Liberia with 26 members of her family, most of them children, described how her aunt, who lives in Belegleu, housed all of them in her hut for several months. Later, Annie was given a small plot of land right next to her aunt's house where she and her family were able to build a hut of their own.

Even in the border villages, however, everything is far from cozy. Flore Kwane, an official with the Ministry of Interior in Abidjan, says, "How can I say it? The notion of respecting the traditional authority is very developed in the Ivorian community, but it seems that it's not the same in the Liberian community. So, a chief in an Ivorian village can decide something for the villagers and they accept it. But that's not the case with the Liberians." When the number of refugees in a village becomes even higher than the number of locals, the issue of authority and decision-making "can become a concern," Ms. Kwane adds.

Farther from the border, the level of kinship between locals and refugees decreases, and tensions increase. The issue of rent for housing and farmland becomes thorny. Refugees complain that their hosts demand part of their food rations as rent. While some refugees have been given small plots of land to farm, most work on locals' land, receiving only a small share of the harvest in return.

A refugee in the town of Tai said bitterly, "There is no relationship. When we get food, relations are okay, but when the food is finished, the relationship is finished." Other refugees complain that when locals hire them for odd jobs or to work in their fields, they don't pay them as promised.

One refugee said, "They promise to pay you 200 CFAs, but when you complete the work, they only give you 100." Locals, on the other hand, complain that refugees take their hospitality for granted and often are not willing to share with their hosts.

Control of the food that comes into the villages for the refugees can be a major source of friction. Usually, the village chief and the representative of the refugees are supposed to ensure that the food is distributed among the refugees.

In villages where there is a balance in the number of refugees to locals and where the two leaders

work well together, the system works.

In villages where refugees outnumber locals and where the refugee leader has become more powerful than the village chief, refugees are said to be less likely to share, and locals' resentment of the refugees grows.

But the reverse also happens, particularly in villages where the refugees' presence and leadership is not strong. In one village where the local chief reported an inflated number of refugees in order to collect more food for himself, relief officials reduced the food rations to the village. The village chief retaliated by forcing some of the refugees to leave his village, so that he could still keep more food for himself.

Another problem is access to health care and medicine, which according to the Ivorian government's generous policy is supposed to be available without cost to both locals and refugees.

One refugee in the town of Tai said, "If I need medical care, I can go free to the clinic, but then for medicine they give you a prescription to take to the pharmacy, where you have to pay. If you sell rice to get money to pay for medicine, later you have nothing to eat."

In Danane, a large town with the highest concentration of refugees in Côte d'Ivoire, the problems, and ensuing tensions, reach a peak. Many of the refugees there, who nearly outnumber local townspeople, are of urban background. Most do not have direct links to the local people.

They rent rooms and houses where several families often live in cramped quarters. While refugees complain of the difficult time they have surviving, of harassment by local police, and of discrimination against them, locals in turn complain bitterly about the refugees. Cultural differences between the two groups lead to some of the friction.

One example is the way women dress. Some Liberian women, whose style of dress is more akin to that in the United States than in West African villages, dress in jeans and even shorts. Many Ivorians consider such dress inappropriate. Riding in a taxi in Danane, the author overheard remarks between a woman passenger in the taxi and the taxi driver upon spotting a woman wearing shorts. *"N'est pas bon, N'est pas bon,"* (It's not good, not good) they repeated to each other.

It is the increase in crime and violence, however, that is the greatest source of friction in Danane, and which most draws the attention and concern of government officials as far away as Abidjan. Ivorian government officials acknowledge that delinquency is not new, but say that it has increased significantly, particularly in Danane, since the arrival of the Liberian refugees.

A local teacher described the changes he has seen in Danane: "Before the refugees arrived, Danane was small, calm. Now it's not safe. Violence has increased. There is more fighting, stealing, guns, and insecurity. You can't walk the streets late at night." It is locals' resentment of these unwelcome changes that has most fueled the tensions between themselves and refugees.

Now, refugees are feeling the first effects of an Ivorian backlash. Since May 1991, the Ivorian government has withheld refugee status from newly arrived Liberians (an exception was made in the case of 10,000 Liberian refugees who arrived in the Tai beginning in June following intense fighting in their home region of Grand Gideh county).

A UNHCR official in Danane said, however, "The government of Côte d'Ivoire does not seem to recognize *prima facie* refugee status for new arrivals, except for those clearly fleeing conflict, for example those recently arrived in Tai. But those arriving in Danane from NPFL (Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia) areas are being considered 'tourists' or 'visitors'. That's a fairly radical change (in policy)." Without refugee status, refugees not only fear for their

In one village the local chief reported an inflated number of refugees in order to collect more food for himself.

security, they are also unable to register for food aid.

The Ivorian government's motivation in taking this position is not clear, but most observers believe that it is primarily intended to keep more refugees from coming.

In interviews with recently arrived refugees, many cited either fear of persecution or concern about the general security situation in Liberia as their reason for fleeing.

One of two brothers who fled together said, "The war is not over. If it were, we wouldn't be here. Soldiers come and take whatever they want." Asked if they would have come had they heard that they would not get food aid, he responded, "Yes, because we could not stand the tension."

All the refugees at the transit center in Danane agreed that without being able to register for food aid, they will experience tremendous hardship. UNHCR is interviewing the new arrivals to identify those who are most vulnerable.

Nevertheless, as of late August, the Ivorian authorities, though indicating they would allow the most vulnerable to register for food aid, had not taken any concrete steps to permit that. Even if they do, that would not tackle the larger issue of the government's denial of refugee status, an issue that UNHCR and the international community should pursue vigorously with the Ivorian authorities.

While recent agreements among the parties involved in the Liberian conflict offer hope that a political resolution may be on the horizon, many Liberian refugees are wary of words. They want to be sure that their security in Liberia is guaranteed before returning home. That could take time. Meanwhile, the refugees remain in Côte d'Ivoire and and other countries of asylum. It is necessary, therefore, that existing problems associated with the cohabitation be addressed and resolved.

The Ivorian/Liberian refugee cohabitation has been a great experiment (albeit not a planned one) with implications for the refugee flows of the future.

There is no doubt that, to a large extent, and particularly in its early stages, cohabitation has been a success. But since cohabitation situations may well arise again, it is essential to identify what has worked and what hasn't, in order to apply in the future the lessons being learned now.

HIRAM A. RUIZ
Africa Policy Analyst
U.S. Committee for Refugees

Now, refugees are feeling the first effects of an Ivorian backlash.

Doctor treats a refugee child: cohabitation has been a great experiment

UNHCR / Hartig

JET SET REFUGEES

Refugees still trek across desolate frontiers, but air transport is increasingly a mode of travel for individuals who cannot find asylum close to home.

In Europe, the number of asylum-seekers has more than doubled in the last five years and air travel has played a major role.

The airport influx has put an extra burden on countries long famous for aiding the persecuted. The pressure has moved governments to institute measures to stem the arrivals.

Helmut Buss, UNHCR protection officer for Switzerland and Liechtenstein, says that instead of erecting new barriers, governments should prepare for a rise in the number of asylum demands from air travelers.

"As governments start to close borders, it doesn't surprise me that people start to charter planes," said Buss.

In late 1990 as war was brewing in the Persian Gulf, 156 Iraqi Kurds did just that - chartering an Egyptian airliner and flying to London to request asylum. The Egyptian firm was slapped with fines totaling $263,069 for helping the Kurds find safety without making sure they had entry visas.

The asylum barriers

Many governments have urged airlines to scrutinize passports and visas before take-off. Some governments now apply carrier sanctions, stiff fines for each undocumented passenger.

Sanctions are now on the books of several Western countries, and range from $1,000 to $4,385 for each passenger. They have had an effect on the number of airport asylum requests. A year after Britain's fines were introduced, airport asylum applications dropped by 50 percent.

The use of carrier sanctions, especially in Europe, has been motivated in part by the Schengen Convention, which will end frontier controls between eight countries. Schengen requires the harmonization of immigration policies, and carrier sanctions are one means of preventing a member-country from becoming a conduit for refugees and migrants alike.

Refugee organizations and UNHCR have raised their complaints before governments, but the right of people to seek asylum is already being left on the tarmac.

But harmonizing entry policies does little to end the persecution and violence that often cause refugee exoduses. Asylum-seekers instead turn to the black market for passports and visas.

Jane Hughes of the Danish Refugee Council said sometimes asylum-seekers even rent passports to get onto airliners. Middlemen on the same flight then take the documents back. Upon arrival the asylum-seeker approaches immigration officials to request asylum, but without a convincing story may instead be put on the next plane home.

Some immigration agents do try to document claims and follow UNHCR's Procedures for the Determination of Refugee Status, which encourage each official to "use all the means at his disposal to produce the necessary evidence in support of the application."

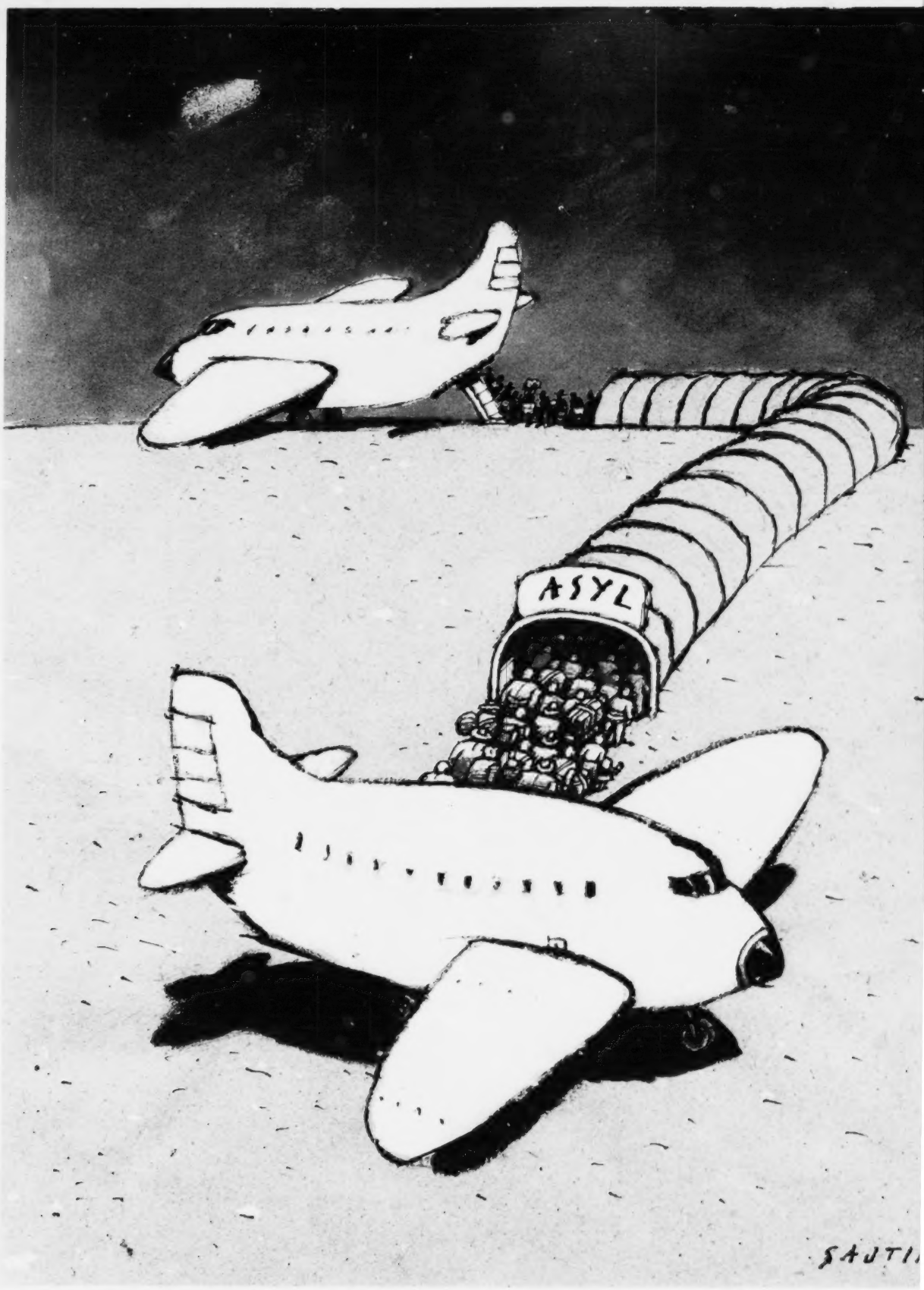
While these humanitarian guidelines have helped thousands of individuals, in recent years some deserving of refugee status have been simply turned around.

The orbit problem

Immigration agents, whose job is to stem the influx of foreigners, often look askance at "jet set" refugees. Often border authorities refuse to hear asylum claims. Refugees may then land in "orbit" shuttled among countries unwilling to give them shelter.

Swiss asylum advocates were shocked in 1991 when a case of "human ping-pong" occurred between Switzerland and Austria. Four Iraqi Kurds were repeatedly flown between Zurich and Vienna because neither government was willing to grant even temporary asylum.

After 15 days the situation was resolved when Switzerland agreed to examine the asylum request of the four and give them temporary protection. At Zurich's airport, asylum-seekers often wait two weeks before their cases are decided, said Alexandra zu Pappenheim, a lawyer with the Swiss Office for Aid to Refugees. Single men sleep on chairs in a windowless room, while families are given chambers in the airport's basement.


ASYL

The untrained airlines

The new response towards immigration has UNHCR concerned.

"Carrier sanctions shift the burden of considering asylum claims to airlines that will err on the side of exclusion," said former UNHCR consultant Nancy Etzwiler.

Refugee advocates fear that unified borders could spell trouble for the right to asylum.

The sanctions have left airlines riled as well, as tens of millions of dollars in fines have already been levied.

"No business likes fines of that scale," said Bran Madge, executive secretary of the Board of Airline Representatives in the United Kingdom, referring to Britain's recently doubled fines of $3,372 per passenger. "It's a rather large penalty."

UNHCR/A. Hollmann

"We are worried about Schengen," said Patrick Delouvin, refugee coordinator for Amnesty International in Paris. Delouvin said that airline personnel will be put in the position of screening asylum-seekers, something that should be the government's responsibility.

Some European legislators also fear that airline boarding gate personnel are screening individuals.

"Airlines should not be set up as committees of judgement, it's not their job," European parliamentarian Lord Mackie of Benshie said. "Putting responsibility onto the airline is entirely wrong."

An airline's fear of heavy fines was tragic for three Sri Lankan men in April 1990. After arriving at London's Heathrow airport they were kept from lodging asylum claims and put on a flight back to their country of origin, where two were promptly beaten by waiting police.

The future

With carrier sanctions, the incentive for an airline to take a chance on a passenger with a story of torture but questionable papers may be long gone.

An official at the International Air Transport Association who refused to be identified said firms are now making private deals with governments to avoid fines. Western immigration officials have been caught working in refugee source countries wearing airline uniforms and working under the guise of boarding gate personnel.

Refugee organizations and UNHCR have raised their complaints before governments, but the right of people to seek asylum is already being left on the tarmac.

PETER KESSLER

ISSUES

NEW MANDATE? WHAT NEW MANDATE?

Moments of crisis and doubt are commonly also the occasion for new religions to arise, and even a heresy or two. When an international agency loses its sense of direction and its faith in principle begins to waver, it's only to be expected that eyes and expectations will find comfort in the dream of a new mandate, clearer instructions, and once and future rules.

UNHCR, say some, needs fresh instruction from the General Assembly. Bound to obey its parent, UNHCR must yet live with rules that at base reflect the values and concerns of a by-gone era. Today, walls fall, curtains rise, and States collapse to re-emerge, multiplied. The old, cold doctrine doesn't cut the mustard; or does it?

What doesn't work? Sure, its tough times for UNHCR, even tougher for refugees. States are talking loud and playing hard to get. And violence against the refugee and the foreigner is looked on with the blind eye of those, not just in the developed world, who once when it was fashionable preached protection on the high seas, first asylum and tolerance in distant lands.

For years unwilling to resource their systems - with dollars, staff-time, training, information - governments too often now redefine efficiency as closing down and shutting out. As if suffering and flight might, like poverty or need, be legislated away. They are not and cannot be; the human plight of those who flee remains before us. And human ingenuity, intrinsically light years ahead of bureaucracy, will get there anyway, driven by risk and urgent necessity.

So what is wrong with the UNHCR mandate, the statute adopted by the General Assembly at its fifth session on 14 December 1950 and annexed to resolution 428? Is it paragraph 1, which requires the High Commissioner to assume responsibility to provide international protection to refugees? Or to work with governments to seek solutions? Is it the personal scope of the statute, with its ambiguous references to categories, groups, and individuals with a well-founded fear of persecution? Hardly, for States themselves, acting repeatedly through the General Assembly, have made it abundantly clear that they want international protection and assistance to be accorded to a broad range of people in distress, far exceeding the initial scope of UNHCR's mandate.

So perhaps it is some limit to the nature and extent of UNHCR's activities?

Repatriation and resettlement, originally subject to approval by the General Assembly under paragraph 9, have long since entered the regular program. So maybe it's the further requirement to obtain similar approval before the High Commissioner appeals for funds? But that too is now an accepted feature of UNHCR activities.

So what's the problem? And what's the General Assembly to do? Obviously we know something's wrong. States, for one, do not seem to share with UNHCR a single sense of who is a refugee, or what that implies. What is more, they lack the modalities, national or international, for protecting those who don't fall within the Convention refugee category, but nonetheless have other valid reasons for flight. States have difficulty, too, implementing immigration decisions, such as removal. And often seem unable, individually or collectively, to take the necessary pro-active steps to moderate or remove the causes of flight, to promote the mediation of conflict and the resolution of disorder, or to open the windows of local opportunity.

A new mandate is not needed. That mandate is, can and should be, renewed every day - in every contact with a refugee, in every dealing with government, in being there.

So whose problem is it now? UNHCR's, and its mandate? Or States', with all their sovereign capacity? More and more it looks like the latter.

Sure, UNHCR could be stronger; but no General Assembly resolution today will impose obligations on States. Sure, it could get involved at source, but step by step may be the way through this minefield, rather than determinedly asserting some grandiose general principle. Sure, UNHCR needs a regular budget, not one subject to voluntary contribution and the whims of national interest; and there's a point to focus.

But a new mandate? Just look at paragraph 8 of the Statute. Apply it and develop it with imagination and a program of action stretches out - promoting protection and solutions, initiating and facilitating international cooperation with and between States, inviting in and coordinating the complementary work of other international institutions and non-governmental organizations.

UNHCR's role is to be of service to refugees, to provide them with protection and assistance; but it also has responsibilities towards States, upon whose territory and within whose jurisdiction solutions must be found, and the reasons for flight avoided.

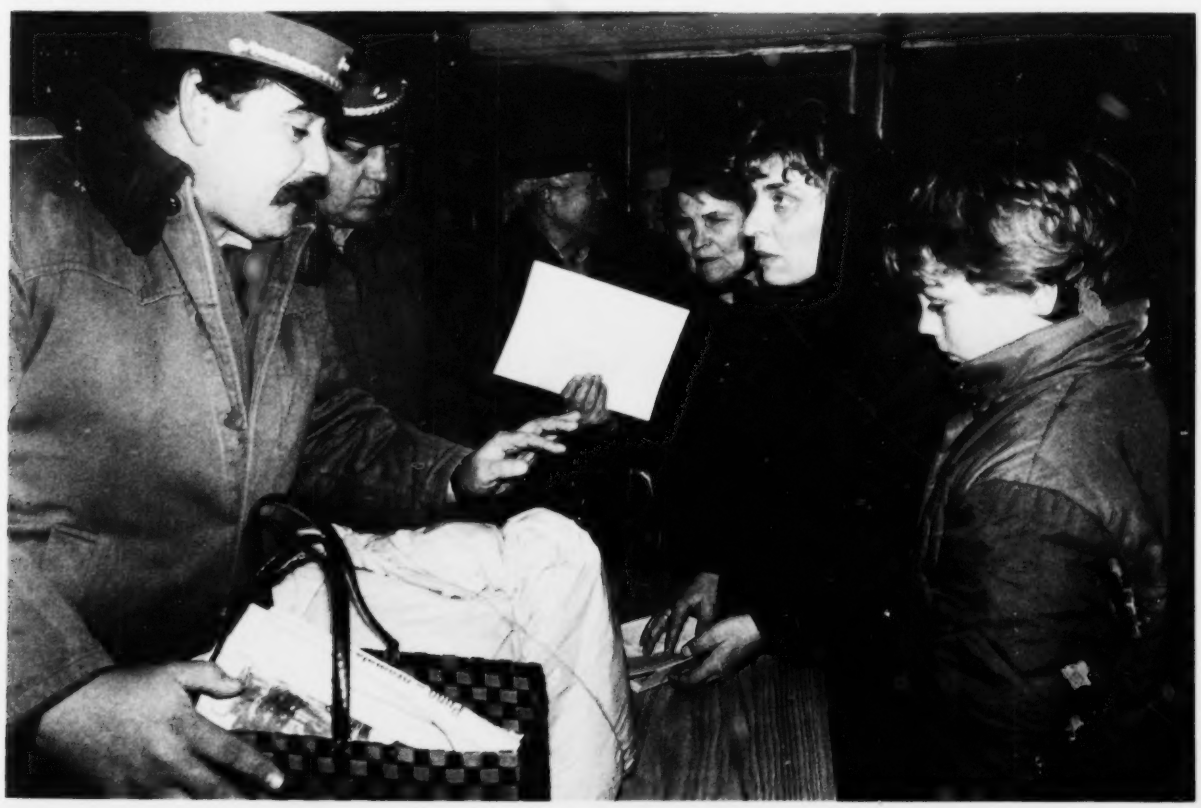
A new mandate is not needed. That mandate is, can and should be, renewed every day - in every contact with a refugee, in every dealing with government, in being there.

What may be needed is refocus and return to principle. That doesn't come from preachy words, but only from action. That means reviewing the empty rhetoric, and filling it with the substance of protection as a working tool. It means showing the way to governments seemingly overwhelmed and lost in the mire of functional problems, actively and effectively helping them to reach the known goals of protection.

If, in the end, who shouts loudest owns the problem, that should not blind us to the scope for cooperative enterprise.

GUY S. GOODWIN-GILL
Editor-in-Chief
International
Journal of Refugee Law

Refugees from the war in Yugoslavia: valid reasons for flight



UNHCR / A. Hollmann

A VIEW FROM THE PRESS GALLERY ...

In arid, inhospitable bush-land miles from anywhere, Somali refugees in eastern Ethiopia were living in tiny round huts made from twigs, branches and pieces of sacking. The refugees were hot, dirty and desperate for food and water. A visit from a bunch of foreign journalists prompted a quick demonstration. "We want food," screamed women in rage. The scene in special feeding tents was pitiful. Skeletal children whimpered, their eyes glazed.

This was in April and the war which overthrew Mengistu Haile Mariam a month later was reaching a climax. The conflict was disrupting supplies to camps like Teferi Ber, east of a small town called Jijiga near the border with northern Somalia.

Things were not easy for anyone trying to help these people.

But the journalists bumped their way back along a rutted dirt track to Jijiga and gave the UNHCR man there a hard time.

"Why is the food supply so erratic? When are you going to provide for the returnees to go home? What's the point of the UNHCR if you say you don't have the funds to do this?"

The UNHCR man was understandably nervous. What could he, a representative in the field, say about decisions and funds negotiated by Headquarters?

The Horn of Africa has one of the world's largest concentrations of refugees and displaced people: hundreds of thousands of victims of wars over the last decade in Sudan, Ethiopia and Somalia.

UNHCR, which has the bulk of responsibility for looking after them, works in ghastly conditions bringing essential supplies to camps which spring up in places which seem life-defying. But the agency is attacked with depressing frequency by journalists in the region. It sometimes seems unaware it could do more to defend itself - providing better explanations of constraints, successes and failures.

Journalists in developing countries learn quickly that aid agencies often act like rivals and relish criticizing each other. This applies even within what one might think would be the cozy coterie of the UN groups.

It can be hard, sometimes, to sort out the truth from the gossip. In the case of UNHCR, the negative stories range from tales of inefficiency to what some see as excessive deference to the dictators of the region. In Somalia, for example, UNHCR was often attacked for accepting former president Mohamed Siad Barre's dubiously large figures for the number of Ethiopian refugees in his country.

Criticism such as this obscures the positive side of the story - that at least UNHCR is providing a bare minimum for most of the refugees in harsh conditions.

Sometimes it has to move fast to catch up with events such as the shifts in the wars last year in Somalia and Ethiopia.

One example of a rapidly changing refugee scene comes from the end of the three-year war in northern Somalia in January. The victory of the former rebel group, the Somali National Movement, meant minority clans in the area fled west to Ethiopia. It also meant that several hundred thousand longer-term Somali refugees in the eastern Ethiopian camps could now return home.

UNHCR did not have a fully-staffed office in the northern Somali capital Ha.geisa until November, although it would certainly have been useful as former refugees returned home to normal life. Some of the former refugees I spoke to in Hargeisa, a dusty, bombed-out shell of a town, talked almost wistfully of a better life in the Ethiopian camps.

Many people who had come home still commuted regularly back to the camps for food aid hand-outs. That meant UNHCR had done a great job in the camps ensuring people had the essentials. The next step should be to provide these people with all the help they can get - but back home.

FRANCES KERRY
Reuters, Nairobi

It sometimes seems unaware it could do more to defend itself - providing better explanations of constraints, successes and failures.

EARNING A LIVING

At the Akura Khattak training camp outside Peshawar, 14-year-old Abdul is learning to weave carpets portraying the complex artistry of his war-devastated Afghan homeland.

At nearby Kababian camp, Ragsha, 23, fluffs cotton for a quilt-making center using a method developed by his ancestors more than 2,000 years ago in Afghanistan.

Abdul and Ragsha are just two of the 6,000 Afghan refugees who have found work, training and income in projects run by Ockenden Venture, a British voluntary agency.

The program was established in 1984 and was financed initially by UNHCR for some of the five million people displaced by 13 years of war in Afghanistan. The objective was not only to encourage self-reliance among the poorest and most vulnerable Afghans but also help them maintain their rich cultural heritage.

The program now includes handicraft production, quilt-making, tent production, tailoring, medical and dental care. These projects are designed to assist the most needy refugees: unregistered women who receive no rations, mothers without husbands, orphans and disabled men.

Ockenden's handicraft project is the largest employer, with a current labor force of some 2,750, most impoverished but skilled women. It was started in 1985 with UNHCR funding, which enabled the agency to buy sewing materials and to visit camps where the most needy women could be identified. The project opened a retail shop in Peshawar to sell handicrafts produced by the refugees.

Early in 1986, the Ockenden Venture began to develop an export market for these goods, and since 1988 no further UN funding has been necessary. The handicraft project now produces nearly 500 different items and markets a further 150 items for other voluntary agencies, including jewelry, leather bags, clothes, embroidery, pottery, knitwear, carpets, mats, hats, socks and toys. Seventy percent of these goods are sold overseas, mostly to non-profit-making wholesalers.

The money raised is reinvested in refugee assistance projects, such as the children's department of the Afghan dental clinic in Peshawar. Here, under the supervision of an Afghan doctor and nurse, over 1,500 children a year are trained in preventive dental care and supplied with toothbrushes and toothpaste. Surplus funds also allow the Ockenden Venture to distribute relief items such as pots and pans to new arrivals from Afghanistan, and to provide quilts for victims of natural disasters such as earthquakes and floods common in northern Pakistan and in the southern provinces of Afghanistan.

Employing Afghan refugee workers, the agency has over the past five years built schools, warehouses, bridges, roads and basic health units on behalf of UNHCR in camps and villages up to 150 kilometers from Peshawar. Such UNHCR-sponsored construction projects also provide expertise for other UN operations. For example, Ockenden has erected tent warehouses for the UN Logistical and Transport Operation (UNILOG) in both Afghanistan and Pakistan, including an extensive facility at Perpet, UNILOG's central depot.

Such projects also play an important role in reducing the burden Afghan refugees have placed on Pakistan.

Donors should not expect a sizeable repatriation of refugees to Afghanistan until the war is over, millions of mines have been cleared, and an effective and widespread start has been made in the reconstruction of Afghanistan. With more refugees needing help and cutbacks in the funding available, income generation for Afghans is more important than ever before.

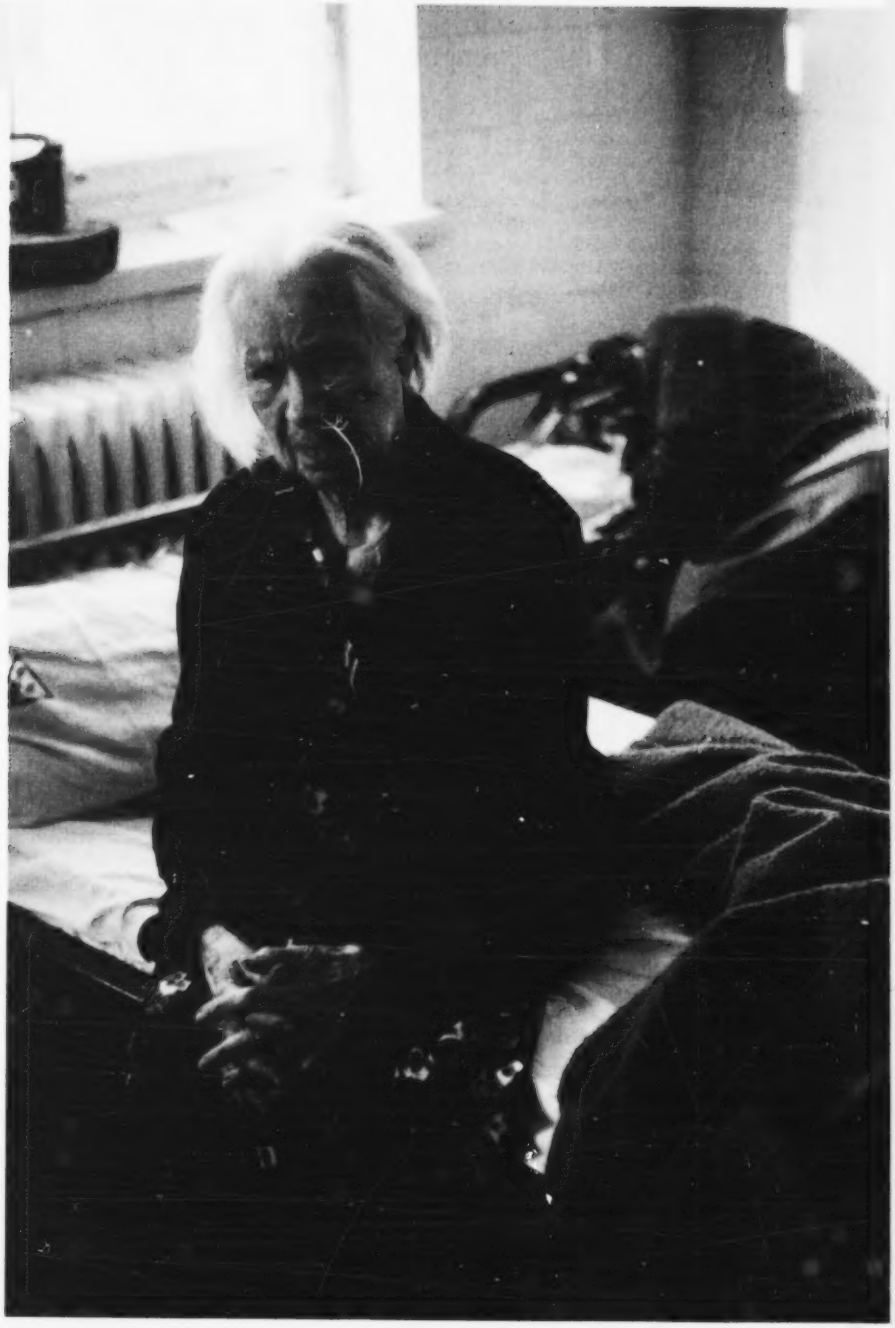
MICHAEL STONE
Director, Ockenden Venture, Pakistan Program

FLIGHT FROM WAR

A last glance at the past. This young woman is one of nearly 50,000 Croats who fled the war in Yugoslavia seeking sanctuary in Hungary.

REFUGE

A school bus crosses the Hungarian border from war-torn Yugoslavia. The teacher is in shock as she negotiates with the border guards. The bus stopped many times to avoid bombings. The children were evacuated when their school became a target.



They don't really understand what is going on. They are deeply sad, more depressed than really sick. Scores of old people were evacuated from old age homes because of the violence. Many are in their nineties and have lost everything except a small bag of belongings.

Photos: UNHCR A. Hollman

UNHCR and the world's 17 million refugees would like to thank the generous individuals who contributed to its operations in 1991. Among the thousands who reached deep into their own pockets were:

Abdul Jalil Khan, Isa Town
Raul Agosto, North York
Nguyen Quy Bong, Ottawa
Lee Coulter, Vancouver
Barbara Dickie, Cambridge
A. V. Gunabalasingam, Scarborough
Thinh Hoang, Scarborough
Ruth Jefferson, Halifax
Talbot G. Johnson, Senneville
Robert Kranc, Burnaby
Linda MacGougan, Calgary
Thérèse Sénégal, Montréal
Jennifer Sommerville, Ottawa
Uwe Storjohann, Scotland
Isabel Teles, Mississauga
Atoumany Comboatoumany, Ouani
Tue Duc Nguyen, Braband
Kadra Ali Mohamed, Mikkeli
María Jesús Amestoy, Facture
Laziz Amraoui, Nantua
Laurence Arpi, Orléans
Christine Assie, Narbonne
Paulette Barrai-Poignard, Vidauban
Annette Berard, Lyon
Hayriye Cagdas, La Ferté-Sous-Jouarre
Marc Champel, Saint Denis de l'Hôtel
Marie-Catherine Chourafa, La Varenne
Guy Desanti, Saint-Flour
Robert Duhard, Saint-André de Cubzac
Marcel Favas, Cavaillon
Martine Feraud, Saint Jeannet
Marie France Fofana, Villeurbanne
France Loisirs, Paris
Dominique Gaste, Bauge
Laurence Gaudin, Bordeaux
Gaz de France, Paris
Gil Geudj, Gradignan
Jean Godard, Dombasle
Danielle Hainglaise, Rueil Malmaison
Kristie Hammarstrom, Montferrat
C. and N. Houvenaeghel, Château Thierry
D. Ingremeau, Fontaine D'Ozillac
Joëlle Klein, Neufchâteau
Nathalie Lietar, Plan de la Tour
Tan Loc Nguyen, Aulnay-sous-Bois
Gilles Piquois, Paris
Thierry Poirier, Les Mureaux
Anne Marie Rousset, Pertuis
Véronique Sanchez, Esquiule
Chantal Thévenin, Vienne
L. Thongmanivong, Vitry-sur-Seine
Ngo Van Tot, Narbonne
M. Trabalon, Cavaillon
Catherine Truflandier, Mérignac
Sylvie Vaxelaire, Remiremont
C. Velasco, Ormesson-Sur-Marne
Gerhard Bissenger, München
Horst Bodden, Würselen
Christian Delles, Kaufering
Alexander Epp, Eberbach
M. and H. Etzel, Bad Homburg
Reinhard Fuhr, Darmstadt
Regina Görner, Essen
Fritz Hönninger, Gelsenkirchen-Buer
Erika Koch, Bochum
Mathias Kouami Kpogah, Dotlingen
Franz Kranich, München
Evi Kress, Gerbrunn
Birkhild Leupold, Freising
S. von Manstein, Irschenhausen
Achim Mertens, Wagen
Andreas Mieth, Berlin
Erich and Aenne Oberle, Neub
Ernst Schleimer, Trier
Berta Schmitz, Mechernich
Hans Jürgen Schneider, Ratlingen
Rudolph Schomerus, Bonr
Ursula Seyffert, Hamburg
Franz Slemr, München

Almut Störk, Hannover
H. Teichmüller, Moers
D. Zimmerman, Köln
Ann Waters, Tamale
Don Schorfield, Athens
Jake Ross, Hong Kong
Sary George Tchea, Hong Kong
Nadette Foley, Dublin
Miriam Thérèse O'Brien, Dublin
Lucia Basile, Venezia
Elio De Boni, Bolzano
Enzo Bozzolo, Cuneo
I. Castrogiovanni, Firenze
Stefanio Cogno, Cuneo
Dante Ferraris, Allessandria
Antonina Galluzzo, Viterbo
Tarcisio Gazzini, Trento
Elena Ippoliti, Roma
Maria Eugenia Mongini, Roma
Ilse Restelli, Como
Evelina Rizzo, Catanzaro
Christina Rizzo, Torino
Maria Rodighiero, Vicenza
Giuseppe Uneddu, Sassari
Marcellino Zamsavio, Soave
Andrea Zerbini, Ferrara
Andare Alie Genti, Grugliasco
Vito Mastrangelo, Pescara
Yoshio Hirabayashi, Kadoma
Chang Fee Ming, Kuala Terenggan
Peter Wong, Selangor
Jacques Gorrissen, Panningen
Imoloto M. Ukah, Nsu
Verda J. Glick, Santa Ana
Kourosh Pourgolnam, Gävle
Peter Baumgartner, Fluehli
Helena Forsblom, Genolier
Fritz Lenze, Genève
Huy Nguyen, Puplinge
Jacques Garault, Bombouaka
Cynthia Banks, Sale
E. Ecroyd, South Croyden
Philip Gould, Wells
C.M. Harper, Norwich
D.J. Hathi, Middlesex
H.W. Kee, Sevenoaks
Deborah Quilgars, York
Denys Kay-Robinson, Salisbury
Ann Rosenhagen, Chartridge
M Shilling, Woodbridge
Joanna Stevens, London
Jillian Swinhoe, Leeds
Marcia Baird, Denver
Brook J. Brown, Boulder
Bruce A. Brown, San Mateo
Lois Brown, Raleigh
Amy L. Casey, San Francisco
Lionel Clark, Bronx
Barbara Dunham, Nashua
Lydia D'Addario, Eugene
Kelly Feeley, Amherst
K. Gammelgard, Rancho Cordova
J. S. Hitchcock, St. Joseph
Hai Duc Ho, Tacoma
Khanh Ho, Mansfield
Maureen Hurley, Kittery
Trinh Le, Fountain Valley
E. Lindenberger, Honolulu
S. McSharry, Salt Lake City
Ton-Hoan Binh Nguyen, Mountain View
Phanh Phathammavong, Sacramento
Gordon Priemer, Shaker Heights
Nadine Selden, Costa Mesa
Rupa Shah, Forest Park
Bridget Votel, Minneapolis
Thomas Weiser, Brooklyn
Roberta Woldt, West Seneca
J. Kilunde, Solwezi
Peter Ubomba-Jaswa, Harare.

The First Water Purifiers That Give You Nothing To Worry About.

PŪR® WATER PURIFIERS CAN HANDLE WHATEVER THE WORLD DISHES OUT.

Major advancements in portable outdoor water purification, the new PŪR Explorer, Scout and Traveler are designed for people who need clean, safe, drinking water anywhere in the world.

ONLY TRITEK™ TECHNOLOGY INSTANTLY ELIMINATES *ALL* MICROORGANISMS AS YOU PUMP.

The PŪR Water Purifiers use advanced Tritek water purification technology developed for NASA. Tested at The Johns Hopkins University and the University of Arizona, and registered with the U.S. EPA, it removes Giardia and kills disease-causing viruses and bacteria such as cholera, polio and hepatitis A. The result is good-tasting, microbiologically pure water.

Tritek technology is more clog resistant than ordinary filtering products. Other systems rely on microfilters with pores made as small as possible to strain out cysts and bacteria. As a result, these products tend to clog quickly, making pumping difficult. Tritek, on the other hand, is more reliable using a combination of microfilters to remove the largest, hard-to-kill microorganisms such as Giardia and tri-iodine resin to kill bacteria and viruses. It is water-purifying technology at its best.

THERE'S A PŪR WATER PURIFIER FOR ALL YOUR FIELD NEEDS.

The PŪR Explorer's durable construction and unique self-cleaning system makes it easy to use. It's the only self-cleaning water purifier in the world, with an easy pumping action that produces 1 liter per minute. The Explorer weighs only 600 g. and is 27 cm. long, making it lightweight and easy to carry. And its replacable purification cartridge will make approximately 2,000 liters of clean drinking water (depending on the quality of the specific water supply).

The PŪR Scout—our mid-priced water purifier—is designed for emergency use. It's durable, lightweight (340 g.) and produces one-half liter of microbiologically pure water in one minute.

The PŪR Traveler is the world's most compact water purifier (17 cm. tall). Designed to provide clean drinking water in hotels, offices or residences where tap water may be contaminated. It's dependable, easy to use and fits in your briefcase or purse.

The PŪR carbon Cartridge (not shown) attaches quickly and easily to both the Explorer and Scout, making sure your drinking water is free of many pesticides, herbicides and other chemicals, as well as great tasting.

Wherever you are working in the world, insist on the world's most worry-free water purifiers. Insist on PŪR.

DO YOU HAVE ANY OTHER WATER PURIFICATION NEEDS?

Since 1986, Recovery Engineering has developed the most advanced, portable water purification systems in the world. Our first purifier, the Survivor, is the only hand-operated desalinator for offshore cruising and sailing.

Over the years, we have designed and built a variety of PŪR water purifiers for seawater and freshwater use. They are used throughout the world by the armed services, medical personnel, and the Peace Corps, as well as business and recreational travelers.

Call 1-800-845-PURE or write for more information or just to talk about your water purifying needs.

TRAVELER

EXPLORER

SCOUT

PŪR

2229 Edgewood Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55426

© 1991 PUR, a division of Recovery Engineering, Inc.

Every year, thousands of babies are born with a serious handicap.

She looks perfectly normal. But she was born a refugee – and that's serious. Many thousands of children grow up knowing no other life. They are innocent victims of persecution and violence.

UNHCR is there to help refugee children. Your attitude can be the difference between hope for their future and despair.

We need <u>your</u> help to help refugees.

UNHCR ACTION
P.O. Box 2500
CH 1211 Geneva 2
Switzerland

UNHCR
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees